

My host, who has shot 50 odd tigers himself and been in at the death of nearly three times this number, could make nothing of the experience. It is worth mentioning that in between the visits she paid us, we heard her calling at intervals, what is commonly believed to be the mate call. She was a young animal and had not had cubs; she taped 8 foot.

URNA ESTATE,
MAROWRAH P.O.,
B. & N.W.Ry.,
August 1, 1929.

A. MACDONALD.

II.—THE CARACAL IN IRAQ.

(With a photo).

Blandford gives Mesopotamia as the distribution of the Caracal, *Felis caracal*. Pitman in the *Survey of Iraq Fauna* records a possible occurrence. Tristram in the *Survey of Western Palestine* refers to it as the Red Lynx, mentions its scarcity in Palestine, and states that it has a wide distribution occurring through 'all Africa, Arabia, Persia and India'. Sterndale gives Africa, east to Western Asia and India. Protheroe gives S. Africa, Egypt, Arabia and India. Loftus has recorded a specimen from Dizful. One would expect, therefore, that the animal would be found within the confines of present political Iraq.

One possible source of confusion is the jungle cat, *Felis chaus*, possessed of large size, black ear-tufts, yellow tinge, and short tail; it has, however, pronounced markings. The caracal has no obvious markings and is usually of a brick-red colour. One must remember, however, that Buxton in his *Animal Life in Deserts* (p. 160) refers to a desert type from Asben in the South Central Sahara, described by Thomas as differing from all known caracals 'in its exceptionally pallid colouration and silvery ears'. A further source of confusion is of course the true Old World lynx, *Felis lynx* or *isabellina*. Points of difference are the occurrence of a defined ruff in the lynx and the relatively greater length of the tail in the caracal. Tail length to body length ratio in the lynx is about 1 : 4, whereas in the caracal it is at least 1 : 3. The lynx again is of a stolid build, the caracal smaller and of more delicate proportions. The lynx is grey or fawn and may have a suggestion of spotting, particularly in summer (Sterndale's *Mammalia of India*, p. 94). It is stated by Protheroe that the under-parts of the caracal also are slightly besprinkled with black and chestnut spots; the general tinge of the caracal, however, as mentioned above, is reddish. The lynx appears to be the more decidedly 'spotted' animal of the two.

The Arabs in Iraq certainly recognize several sorts of wild cat and various names are current. They seem to me, however, to be applied quite fortuitously and to have no particular classical application. What is 'gurta' to one man is 'herreh' to another and merely

a 'bizzoon' or 'saba' to a third; 'washa' is another common name for a 'big cat'. The descriptive abilities again hardly come up to the requirements of classification.



CARACAL SHOT NEAR RUTBA, MESOPOTAMIA, 1924.

An animal is described, however, from time to time which suggests the Caracal. I have seen no skins unfortunately and was very pleased to get hold of two photographs of an animal shot by Mr. Reid of the Nairn Transport Company near Rutba in 1924.

The animal has the flat face and pointed ears that one associates with the lynx or caracal. The tail is not 'bobby' and relatively too long for the lynx; there is no ruff, spots are missing and the animal lacks the stolidity of a lynx; it has the finer proportions suggestive of the caracal. A suspicion that this was a specimen of the latter animal was confirmed by the Bombay Natural History Society.

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